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ABSTRACT

Prepared for the reading personnel of the California Right to Read program, this document defines general areas and specific items which should be considered in a well-planned, comprehensive reading program for kindergarten through adult learners. It may be used as a guide for planning a reading program, evaluating a current program, or identifying exemplary reading programs. The four major elements in the criteria of excellence which lead to improved reading are commitment by staff and leadership to develop a program themselves, comprehensive needs assessment by on-site faculty, a diagnostic-prescriptive reading approach beginning with the child's current level of achievement, and a program designed to meet the child's needs. Nine sections comprise the criteria of excellence checklist: (1) management and planning; (2) goals and objectives; (3) instruction; (4) staff; (5) leadership development; (6) materials and facilities; (7) community involvement; (8) environment and background; and (9) program evaluation, auditing, and reporting. (JM)

WILSON RILES
Superintendent of Public Instruction
and Director of Education

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
721 CAPITOL MALL, SACRAMENTO 95814

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To: California Right to Read Personnel

From: M. Bruce Hagen
California Right to Read Unit
(916) 445-5361

Subject: Criteria of Excellence - Reading - K through Adult

The criteria of excellence depicts general areas and specific items of interest which should be considered in a well-planned, comprehensive reading program. Reading personnel can use the criteria of excellence as a guide for: planning a reading program; evaluating a presently-functioning reading program; or identifying exemplary reading programs.

Right to Read feels that among the numerous areas contained in the criteria of excellence four major elements seem to lead to improved reading programs. These are:

- o - Commitment on the part of staff and leadership by the principal to make a new program work are much more likely to emerge if they develop the program themselves rather than having it mandated by the "central office."

- o - A comprehensive Needs Assessment encompassing student performance, reading program, teacher performance, resources, and decision-making is accomplished by the on-site faculty.

- o - A diagnostic-prescriptive approach to the teaching of reading in which a teacher begins at the point of the child's current level of achievement is much more productive than beginning at a point where it is assumed the child ought to be.

- o - Rather than fitting the child to the program, educators fit the program to the specific needs of each child.

Although each reading program may not contain every item presented in the Criteria of Excellence, this document can serve as a checklist of items that should be considered.

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USING THE CRITERIA OF EXCELLENCE

The Criteria of Excellence depicts general areas and specific items of interest which should be considered in a well-planned, comprehensive reading program. Reading personnel can use the Criteria of Excellence as a guide for: planning a reading program; evaluating a presently-functioning reading program; or identifying exemplary reading programs.

I. Planning a Reading Program

The Criteria of Excellence can be used as a checklist of items to be considered by a school in planning, defining, and implementing a reading program where a program does not presently exist. The Criteria may also help in identifying and acquiring resources. If the staff wishes, they may use the "pre-date" boxes to mark their progress in the implementation of their planned reading program by placing an "x" in the box when the item is completed. Writing the date of accomplishment (1/7/74) beside the box may also assist in adhering to proposed time lines.

II. Evaluating a Presently-Functioning Reading Program

Schools which have an existing reading program may wish to use the Criteria of Excellence as an assessment form. To evaluate the reading program, staff members may wish to meet as a group to discuss the items in the Criteria, or the school staff may wish to elect an individual to do the assessment with his/her report being heard and discussed at a group meeting. The school could use the "pre-date" boxes for assessment early in the school year. If this is done, the assessment date could be written above "pre-date". For follow-up purposes (to view progress through the year) the school could use "post-date" boxes with the assessment date being written above "post-date". An "x" indicates "yes" for the corresponding item in the Criteria of Excellence; a box left blank would indicate "no", and "NA" would indicate Not Applicable.

III. Identifying Exemplary Reading Programs

The Criteria of Excellence can be used by personnel who are desirous of identifying reading programs which possess outstanding processes and programs. An exemplary reading program may not encompass all of the items listed in the Criteria of Excellence, though most of the general areas should be addressed. To use the Criteria for this purpose, the individual may write the visitation or assessment date above "pre-date" and place an "x" in each box where the item can be answered "yes".

Criteria of Excellence
Right to Read/Reading Task Force

Predate	Postdate	
		I. Management and Planning
		A. A comprehensive needs assessment has been carried out and evidenced by data on:
☐	☐	1. Learner's performance
☐	☐	2. Staff competency level
☐	☐	3. Existing instructional approach
☐	☐	4. Learner's grouping
☐	☐	5. Materials being used
☐	☐	6. Support personnel
☐	☐	7. Facilities
☐	☐	8. Learner's attitude toward reading
☐	☐	9. Staff attitude toward reading
☐	☐	10. Existing evaluation schema
☐	☐	11. Existing diagnostic perscriptive procedures
☐	☐	12. Extent of community involvement
		B. Systematic planning process has been used as evidenced by:
☐	☐	1. Philosophy statements properly formulated to address overall reading aims and intentions.
☐	☐	2. Goal statements properly formulated in terms of meeting or addressing the needs assessment findings
☐	☐	3. Objectives properly formulated to include the necessary elements
☐	☐	4. Priority established for the system of goals and statements of objectives
☐	☐	5. An evaluation scheme based upon and documented by process or completion of stated objectives.
		C. Planning for the reading program has been carried out by a local school site planning group composed of:
☐	☐	1. Classroom teachers (tutors)
☐	☐	2. Parents (affected adults)
☐	☐	3. School district administrator (Director)
☐	☐	4. Other appropriate people (specify)
		D. A management plan has been established for the allocation of time, money, and personnel as evidenced by:
☐	☐	1. A time-task allocation chart
☐	☐	2. A project time-line
☐	☐	3. Other device (specify)

Predate	Postdate		
		II.	Goals and Objectives
			A. The program is guided by a comprehensive set of goals selected by the planning group and states specific instructional objectives as evidenced by:
☐	☐		1. An adopted written list of goals and state objectives for the reading program
☐	☐		2. The establishing of priority of goals
☐	☐		3. Teachers and other staff can explain goals and objectives and the priorities assigned to them.
			B. Goals show concern both with cognitive, affective, and psychomotor areas as evidenced by:
☐	☐		1. Goals and stated objectives dealing with knowledge
☐	☐		2. Goals and stated objectives dealing with the "feeling" and appreciation aspects of reading
☐	☐		3. Goals and stated objectives dealing with skills.
			C. A variety of interested persons had opportunity for input into program goals evidenced by planning committee membership for:
☐	☐		1. Teachers (tutors and/or tutor trainers)
☐	☐		2. The principal or director
☐	☐		3. Representative parents
☐	☐		4. The school or system reading specialists
☐	☐		5. Learners
☐	☐		6. Special resource people in the community who can contribute
☐	☐		7. Other (Specify).
		III.	Instruction
			A. The staff provides the several types of diagnostic assessment necessary for differentiated teaching as evidenced by:
☐	☐		1. Measures of the appropriate level of developmental instruction for each individual (using techniques such as Individual Reading Inventory, the Spache Diagnostic Scale, or the Gilmore Oral Reading Test).
☐	☐		2. Estimations of each learner's optimal level of learning in reading and comparisons with his actual level to determine adequacy of growth (using observations, carefully interpreted aptitude tests, etc.)
☐	☐		3. Use of screening, or diagnostic survey instruments to locate each learner's major strengths and weaknesses in language and reading growth.

Predate	Postdate		
☐	☐	4.	Use of analytical diagnostic instruments and systematic observations to pinpoint precisely any student's difficulties in the areas of language and reading growth: concept development, oral vocabulary, listening skill, speech fluency, work-attack skills, comprehension, rate adjustment, study skills, work habits, and literary appreciation.
☐	☐	5.	Program design to determine the best learning mode for individuals having difficulty.
☐	☐	6.	Detection of subtle learning disabilities that dictate special program adjustments for some individuals (using symptoms checklist)
☐	☐	7.	Use of observations and/or inventories to determine each child's attitude toward reading.
☐	☐	8.	Assessment of whether speech and reading difficulties are caused by certain patterns of linguistic interference from another language or dialect.
☐	☐	9.	Use of reading records to determine the quantity and quality of reading done
☐	☐	10.	Uses of individual checklists to record each child's language and reading skills progress.
		B.	The staff provides the several phases of instruction necessary for a complete reading program as evidenced by:
		1.	Systematic introduction to all learners of the several sets of developmental language and reading skills required for effective communication.
☐	☐		a. Early perceptual, conceptual, vocabulary, and speech knowledge and skill
☐	☐		b. Listening skills (continued)
☐	☐		c. Oral communication skills (continued)
☐	☐		d. Work-attack skills
☐	☐		e. Literal comprehension tasks
☐	☐		f. Interpretive comprehension tasks
☐	☐		g. Evaluative critical comprehension tasks
☐	☐		h. Rate adjustments
☐	☐		i. Study skills in content materials
☐	☐		j. Work habits
☐	☐		k. Literacy appreciation skills and habits
☐	☐	2.	Reteaches those specific language and reading skills which some individuals have not attained or retained.
☐	☐	3.	Involves all learners in many pleasurable reading and language activities which motivate them to read extensively beyond the developmental program.
		C.	The staff differentiates the levels and content of instruction in various phases of the program in accordance with the diagnostic assessments being made continuously as evidenced by:

Predate	Postdate	
☐	☐	1. Avoidance of whole-class instruction except occasionally for special purposes.
☐	☐	2. Provision for small group or individual instruction in the developmental skills areas.
☐	☐	3. Selection of individuals or temporary small groups for reteaching of skills, and rotating skills.
☐	☐	4. Grouping of learners for reading-language activity projects differently than for developmental instruction.

D. The staff utilizes different methods and techniques for teaching according to diagnostic findings as evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Use of a combination of analytic and synthetic approaches to word attack
☐	☐	2. Use of inductive techniques when suitable
☐	☐	3. Use of kinesthetic techniques for certain subtle learning disability cases
☐	☐	4. Use of taped listen-and-look approach for certain subtle disability cases and learners who rely heavily on auditory perception.

E. The staff shows genuine concern for each learner as an individual person as evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Informal visits with individuals about their worries, their personal difficulties, and home problems, and their siblings, etc.
☐	☐	2. Determination of individual interests and aspirations
☐	☐	3. Attention given to successful persons from their own cultural or national origin groups with which they can identify
☐	☐	4. Development of individual pride and sense of belonging by presenting examples of good literature written by people of the same cultural or national origins as the learner
☐	☐	5. Provision for strong positive reinforcement system suited to the different values of individuals and groups
☐	☐	6. Records to inform each learner of his/her progress
☐	☐	7. Parent contacts to report positive behaviors of the learner.

IV. Staff

A. The staffing patterns in the classroom or at an instructional site are differentiated as evidenced by the use of:

		1. Professional Classroom Personnel
☐	☐	a. Professional Teacher

Predate	Postdate	
☐	☐	b. Senior Teacher
☐	☐	c. Master Teacher
		2. Classroom Support Personnel
☐	☐	a. Assistant teacher
☐	☐	b. Paraprofessional aides
☐	☐	c. Parent aides
☐	☐	d. Student aides
☐	☐	e. Peer aides
		3. Administrator/Supervisory Support Personnel
☐	☐	a. District Director or Chief Administrator
☐	☐	b. Site administrator
☐	☐	c. Reading consultant
☐	☐	d. Language arts coordinator
☐	☐	e. School/community coordinator
		4. Special Resource Personnel
☐	☐	a. Diagnostician
☐	☐	b. School psychologist
☐	☐	c. Educational planner
☐	☐	d. Subject area specialist
☐	☐	B. The staffing pattern and contact ratios are small enough for effective instruction to take place.
☐	☐	C. The Classroom teacher/student contact ratio at school sites is 1 - 25 or less.
		D. Instructional competencies of staff and support services personnel are evidenced by an understanding of:
☐	☐	1. Application of the principles of learning
☐	☐	2. The nature and structure of the American English language
☐	☐	3. Psycho socio-economic, linguistic and cultural interference factors in the reading and language learning process
☐	☐	4. Development of early language and perceptual skills
☐	☐	5. Continuous development of language skills in social situations
☐	☐	6. Reading and language components in the curriculum as well as varied instructional techniques
☐	☐	7. Continuous diagnostic assessment of student growth
☐	☐	8. Classroom or instructional program organization for differentiated teaching
☐	☐	9. Approaches to a complete program of word-attack skills
☐	☐	10. An appreciation for literature, comprehension skills, work-type reading, and study skills

Predate	Postdate		
☐	☐	11.	Special reading difficulties as subtle learning disabilities
☐	☐	12.	The student with special linguistic backgrounds
☐	☐	13.	Principles of educational planning and achieving performance objectives.
		E.	Staff Development has been provided for as evidenced by:
☐	☐	1.	A continuing inservice education program broadly conceived and task oriented as well as needs oriented
☐	☐	2.	Total staff participation in planning and inservice education program
☐	☐	3.	Utilization of consultants and technical assistants from within the system and outside as needs dictate.
		F.	Role definitions and task assignments have been published, distributed, and training provided for:
☐	☐	1.	Certificated staff
☐	☐	2.	Classified staff
☐	☐	3.	Aides
☐	☐	4.	Volunteers
		V.	Leadership Development
		A.	The site administration's knowledge and skill in leadership development for reading is being enlarged by:
☐	☐	1.	Site visits to known exemplary programs
☐	☐	2.	Special training seminars or workshops
☐	☐	3.	Personal study of reading programs
☐	☐	4.	College or university credits related to reading
☐	☐	5.	Attendance at state, regional or national reading conferences
☐	☐	6.	Visits work sessions within the school during reading instruction.
		B.	The reading specialist's knowledge and skill in leadership development for reading is being enlarged by:
☐	☐	1.	Site visits to know exemplary programs
☐	☐	2.	Special training seminars or workshops
☐	☐	3.	Personal study or reading programs
☐	☐	4.	College or university credits related to reading
☐	☐	5.	Attendance at state, regional, or national reading conferences
☐	☐	6.	Visits work sessions within the school during reading instruction
☐	☐	7.	By preparing and/or demonstrating materials designed to improve effectiveness in staff development in reading.

Predate	Postdate	
		VI. Materials and Facilities
		A. The educational setting within which the learner is expected to develop skill in reading is conducive to optimum growth in the realization of stated objectives as evidenced by:
☐	☐	1. Availability of space suitable for instructional and assessment activities by individual, small group, and large groups
☐	☐	2. Provision for the use of audio-visual and other mechanical and electronic devices for suplementary reading activities in various settings for various size groups
☐	☐	3. Adequate and appropriate lighting in classroom and study areas
☐	☐	4. Safeguards for the control of auditory sensation at a level possible for maximum instructional operations
☐	☐	5. Available facilities for the identification and/or remediation factors or conditions which may contribute to a diminution of the learner's general stamina and physical well-being (i.e., malnutrition, grandular disorders, visual and hearing handicaps, speech defects, etc.)
		B. The materials of instruction are varied and appropriate to the instructional objectives of the reading program as well as to the developmental needs of the learner, as evidenced by:
		1. Materials available for:
☐	☐	a. <u>developmental reading instruction</u> (basal series and multi-level series with accompanying manuals, workbooks, inventories, test charts, etc.)
☐	☐	b. <u>content-field reading instruction</u> - (sequential subject-field series with accompanying manuals, workbooks, etc.)
☐	☐	c. <u>reading games, devices, programmed aides</u> - (for reinforcement, reteaching, and development).
☐	☐	2. Provision for a school library* and/or classroom library to function as an integral part of the total reading instruction program, and its services to include materials for individualized, developmental, and remedial reading.

* Library is used here to also denote a multi-media center that provides all types of resource materials and serves as an instructional area for developing library skills and knowledge.

Predate	Postdate	
☐	☐	3. The library's varied book collection offering the learner opportunities for reference reading, research, and wide reading at each level of skill.
☐	☐	4. Use of American Library Association guidelines for school library programs and the recommendations of the faculty and community pertaining to the quantities and types of books needed.
☐	☐	5. Demonstration by the reading instructors of their ability to operate and use in creative ways the available materials and instructional devices.
☐	☐	6. Reading instructors involvement in assessing and selecting the reading materials and devices.

VII. Community Involvement

A. Attempts have been made to acquaint the general community of the need and purpose of the reading program as evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Newsletters
☐	☐	2. Meetings
☐	☐	3. Announcements by mass media
☐	☐	4. Other (Specify)

B. Understanding of the reading program by the general community is being promoted as evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Staff meetings with interested groups
☐	☐	2. Special community meetings
☐	☐	3. Parent (adult) classroom visitations
☐	☐	4. Other (specify)

C. Community involvement in setting the goals and/or purposes of the reading program was evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Representation on the planning group
☐	☐	2. Participating in establishing goals for the program
☐	☐	3. Other (Specify)

D. Active participation of the community in the implementation of the program as evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Tutors or volunteer aides assisting with reading
☐	☐	2. Volunteers having attended training sessions for aides who work in the reading program
☐	☐	3. Community people serving as interpreters or liasons to community groups
☐	☐	4. Other (Specify)

Predate	Postdate		
		VIII. Environment and Background	
		A. Records show that the staff has considered the effect of environmental press on the learner as evidenced by personal contacts and valid information on:	
☐	☐	1. Economic status	
☐	☐	2. Attitude toward community (and visa-versa)	
☐	☐	3. Attitude toward school	
☐	☐	4. Physical conditions of home	
☐	☐	5. Parent educational background	
☐	☐	6. Parent national background	
☐	☐	7. Type and degree of cultural identity	
☐	☐	8. Linguistic nature of language used in home	
☐	☐	9. Authority structure in home	
☐	☐	10. Special events which might have been experienced possibly being the cause of remarkable behavior, i.e.	
☐	☐	a. family member in prison	
☐	☐	b. death or critical illness in family	
☐	☐	c. a wartime hero in family	
☐	☐	d. outstanding sports hero	
☐	☐	e. acquisition of wealth by some family member	
		B. The staff gives evidence of an understanding of human behavior and the culturally diverse experience background of students, self, and colleagues by membership and/or participation in:	
☐	☐	1. Professional organizations or associations in the social and behavior sciences, civic or human care services	
☐	☐	2. Civic or human care services, organizations, or associations	
☐	☐	3. School/community organizations or associations	
☐	☐	4. Bilingual/bicultural or multi-lingual and multi-cultural experiences	
☐	☐	5. Active participant or leadership roles in professional education organization or association	
☐	☐	6. Community organizations or associations	
☐	☐	7. Travel or study in other lands or cultures	
☐	☐	8. Reading or special training in human behavior, racial and ethnic group relations, or international education	
☐	☐	9. Personal or professional counseling or guidance activities.	
		IX. Program Evaluation, Auditing, Reporting	
		A. Program evaluation is being carried out as an ongoing function in the reading program as evidenced by:	

Predate	Postdate	
☐	☐	1. Use of documentation on objectives for replanning
☐	☐	2. Systematic monitoring and logging of program implementation
☐	☐	3. Other (Specify).

B. Information used in evaluation of learner progress or program effectiveness comes from not one but a variety of sources and from both formal and informal techniques as evidenced by continuous and systematic use of:

☐	☐	1. Group and individual reading inventories
☐	☐	2. Learner, teacher, and parent questioning about learner interests and reading
☐	☐	3. Teacher observation check lists
☐	☐	4. School records
☐	☐	5. Comments from other teachers
☐	☐	6. Worksheet exercises
☐	☐	7. Learner check lists
☐	☐	8. Records kept by learner
☐	☐	9. Teacher-made tests
☐	☐	10. Standardized reading tests
☐	☐	11. Criterion referenced tests - when available and when keyed to program objectives
☐	☐	12. Other (specify).

C. Reading evaluation includes an assessment of the extent to which learners use the skills they possess as evidenced by:

☐	☐	1. Reports of number and types of books read, based on information from teacher and/or librarian
☐	☐	2. Parent reports of learner's reading outside the school, including materials related to daily living
☐	☐	3. Learner report on how much he reads
☐	☐	4. Teacher observation and reporting of student success in reading in the content areas.

D. Teacher status and change in competence in reading instruction and in attitudes toward reading instruction are assessed as evidenced by information from:

☐	☐	1. Self-rating scales on teacher attitudes and practices in reading instruction
☐	☐	2. Tests of teacher knowledge about the teaching of reading
☐	☐	3. Principal, director, or reading specialist ratings of teachers' attitudes and practices in reading instruction
☐	☐	4. Other (specify).

Predate	Postdate		
		E.	An external audit process has been established for the reading program that:
☐	☐		1. Provides for audit examination of objectives in list of stated goals
☐	☐		2. Checks for compliance with internal evaluation system
☐	☐		3. Provides for periodic audit of progress and management system
☐	☐		4. Provides a final or annual audit of progress that treats both process and product.
		F.	A plan has been formulated for reporting progress and results of the reading program as evidenced by:
☐	☐		1. A written program report
☐	☐		2. Releases to mass media
☐	☐		3. Different kinds of reports for different audiences (consumers of the information)
☐	☐		4. Other (specify).

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